



July 22, 2004

Dear Colleague,

Attached is a fascinating report that gives us just one more glimpse at the personhood of unborn children. This study by researchers at Belfast's Queen's University, reported that one's right or left handedness may be determined as early as ten weeks gestation. The scientists doing this study speak of ten and fifteen week old fetuses favoring either their right or left hands when sucking their thumbs in utero. Ten to twelve years later these children continue to favor the same hand for writing, throwing a baseball or eating.

I urge my colleagues to consider the humanity of these little ones, and urge support for the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act (HR 4420). This legislation, introduced by our distinguished colleague Chris Smith, mandates that mothers be given the option of providing their unborn children with the basic dignity of anesthesia during an abortion. Making anesthesia available does not diminish the inhumanity of a destructive act, but it will at least make it less painful to its victims.

Sincerely,

W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress

This is **LONDON**

22/07/04 - News and city section

Hand we use decided in the womb

By Flora Stubbs, Evening Standard

The hand you prefer to use is decided by the time you are a 10-week-old foetus in the womb, a study shows.

Scientists reached this conclusion after studying ultrasound scans of 1,000 babies - and following them after birth.

The finding could wave goodbye to a long-held view that left- or right-handedness does not develop until a child is three or four years old, says New Scientist.

Professor Peter Hepper, who led the research, found nine in 10 fetuses at 15 weeks' gestation preferred to suck their right thumbs.

His team followed 75 of those fetuses after birth and found that at 10 to 12 years old, all 60 of the right thumbsuckers were right-handed - while 10 of the 15 left thumbsuckers were left-handed.

Nervous connections to the body from the brain are not believed to start developing until 20 weeks' gestation.

Professor Hepper believes the foetus could have a preference for one side of its body simply because that side develops slightly more quickly.

Find this story at <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/articles/12105395?version=1>